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PAKISTAN-USSR: PRESIDENT AYUB IS WARNING HE WILL BUY SOVIET TANKS UNLESS THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN SECURING SIMILAR EQUIPMENT OF US MANUFACTURE ARE RESOLVED SOON.

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[REDACTED] [REDACTED]  
PAKISTAN'S DEFENSE MINISTER HAS INFORMED THE US AMBASSADOR THAT THE USSR HAS AGREED "IN PRINCIPLE" TO SELL PAKISTAN "ANY MILITARY HARDWARE IT WANTS, INCLUDING TANKS." HE NOTED THAT AYUB IS RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE SOVIET OFFER BECAUSE OF COST, LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATION, AND FEAR OF BECOMING EXCESSIVELY DEPENDENT ON THE USSR, BUT THAT PAKISTAN WOULD BE FORCED TO TAKE THE SOVIET TANKS IF US-BUILT TANKS WERE NOT FORTHCOMING SOON.

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THE FAILURE UP TO NOW OF PAKISTAN'S WIDE-RANGING AND INTENSIVE EFFORTS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS TO SECURE TANKS IN THE WEST HAS MADE AYUB INCREASINGLY INTERESTED IN OBTAINING HARDWARE FROM OTHER SOURCES, SPECIFICALLY THE SOVIET UNION AND COMMUNIST CHINA. FROM THE USSR, IN ADDITION TO TANKS, HE MAY BE TRYING TO GET TRANSPORTATION EQUIPMENT, ANTITANK WEAPONS, AIR DEFENSE MISSILES AND AIRCRAFT.

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[REDACTED]  
THE DEFENSE MINISTER MAY HAVE EXAGGERATED THE EXTENT OF SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO PROVIDE EQUIPMENT AS A PRESSURE TACTIC TO IMPROVE PAKISTAN'S UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS OF OBTAINING TANKS FROM WESTERN SOURCES. THE SHAH OF IRAN'S WILLINGNESS TO SELL TANKS TO AYUB HINGES ON THE AVAILABILITY OF MORE MODERN REPLACEMENTS FROM THE US. THE CZECHOSLOVAK CRISIS HAS CAUSED THE ITALIAN ARMY TO OPPOSE THE RELEASE

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OF ANY OF THEIR US-MADE TANKS, AND THE TURKS, WHO HAVE ALSO BEEN APPROACHED, HAVE NOT YET MADE UP THEIR MINDS.

IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, PAKISTAN'S FAILURE TO CRITICIZE SOVIET INTERVENTION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS INDICATIVE OF RAWALPINDI'S RELUCTANCE TO DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT ELIMINATE THE USSR AS A POTENTIAL SUPPLIER OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT.

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